

Shawn P. Dougherty
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Re: Raised Bill No. 5553 "An Act Concerning Substance Abuse Programs"

Mr. Chairman,

My testimony today endorses the Bill that is before you: I would like to make a particular plea regarding Section 4, the immediate reinstatement of the multiple offender drunken driving programs, also known as 14-227f of the general statutes, which was repealed as of 12/31/2011.

I am a citizen of CT and work full time for the Department of Correction as an Addiction Service Counselor. I currently hold a Masters degree in Professional Counseling and I am a certified alcohol and drug counselor. I was appalled when I heard that the multiple offender DWI programs were being abolished due to the last legislative session.

I am aware there are over 20,000 convicted multiple offenders who have never completed the program. It has also been brought to my attention that the DMV was going to pardon these convicted individuals and reinstate their license without them taking a program. I cannot fathom the logic behind this decision. I would understand, but not agree if it were state funded programs they had to take. In this case the multiple offender programs were funded by the offenders. There is no state money required to operate these programs.

Alcoholism and addiction can be cunning, baffling, and a powerful disease. These individuals who have multiple DWI's may suffer from the disease of addiction. It is your responsibility to reinstate these programs so that this disease of addiction can be addressed. Let me give you a simple example, if someone suffers from diabetes or high blood pressure they go to see the Dr. The Dr. will prescribe appropriate treatment and medication. This is the same with addiction and if these individuals are not placed into a program to address their addiction and learn about ways to cope, then the State of CT is failing them and its citizens as a whole.

The last aspect I would like to address is safety. This includes the safety of my family, the safety of your family, the safety of every CT citizen and the safety of these multiple offenders. These programs help to increase safety. These individuals are forced to look at their problems head on, and are made aware of the dangers associated with drinking and driving and alcoholism.

I thank you for your time and trust that my state will do the proper thing and reinstate all multiple offender DWI programming ASAP.



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